



## President Shelly finalizes horse MOU with Gov. Richardson



*Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and former New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson have both initialed off on a memorandum of understanding for the free roaming horses on the Navajo Nation. Richardson and his Foundation to Protect New Mexico Wildlife will assist the Nation with the horses and provide humane treatment and resources for their protection. (Photo by Rick Abasta)*

WINDOW ROCK — Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly announced the agreement between the Navajo Nation and the Foundation to Protect New Mexico Wildlife has been completed.

President Shelly negotiated the terms of the agreement with former New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, who is also co-founder of the Foundation.

“Working together to resolve challenges is our approach as we work with Governor Richardson and his Foundation. They will give us funding and find more resources to reverse the population of feral horses,” President Shelly said. “We will continue

to treat these animals humanely and implement the best solutions to our rangeland issues.”

We thank Governor Richardson and the Foundation for working with the Navajo Nation in this most important effort, he added.

He initialed off on the memorandum of understanding with Gov. Richardson and the Foundation on April 30, 2014.

The agreement between the parties came after months of negotiations and discussions on the language of the agreement.

Gov. Richardson said, “This historic agreement is a great first step in our

efforts to not only protect these horses, but to find humane and long-term solutions that are in the best interest of the Navajo people and their land.”

“I commend President Shelly for his commitment to this issue, and we look forward to getting right to work,” he added.

According to the MOU, the foundation agrees to fundraise and secure resources for the Navajo Nation to use for the successful implementation of the management program.

This will involve working with the federal government, states, conservation groups, private parties, and foundations to identify resources for adoptions, triages, veterinarian services, and sanctuaries.

The Navajo Nation agrees to make reasonable efforts to work with buyers offering humane alternatives to the transportation of horses to slaughter facilities and sales to buyers transporting horses to slaughter facilities.

The Nation will also work with the Foundation to secure resources for the implementation of the program.

The term of the MOU

is one year from the date of execution, which will be announced early summer 2014.

Plans are to have a signing ceremony in Window Rock with Gov. Richardson and Robert Redford. Redford is currently filming a movie and will not be available for the signing until early summer.

“Horses are sacred to the Navajo people. We have songs, prayers and ceremonies that are performed in their honor,” President Shelly said. “We will have a medicine man available during the signing to share our cultural perspective and relationship with horses.”

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